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Letter dated 17 September 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a communication dated 11 September 2014 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, forwarding a report on the International Security Assistance Force operations in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 May to 31 July 2014 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) BAN Ki-moon

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Annex

Letter dated 11 September 2014 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 2120 (2013), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from 1 May to 31 July 2014 (see enclosure). I would appreciate it if you would make the report available to the Council.

(*Signed*) Anders Fogh **Rasmussen**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

I. Introduction

Overview

1. The present report responds to the request made by the Security Council in its resolution 2120 (2013) and informs the Council on the implementation of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). It covers the period from 1 May to 31 July 2014. The continuation of ISAF redeployment and the second round of the presidential election were the key events during the quarter under review.

2. The ISAF campaign continues to focus on the development of the Afghan security institutions[1] and the Afghan National Security Forces in order to set conditions for the completion of a successful security transition on 31 December 2014. ISAF continues to develop the sustainability of the Afghan forces and seeks to mitigate capability gaps and developmental shortfalls. More specifically, gaps and shortfalls remain in ministerial capacity and connectivity, aviation, intelligence, fire support coordination, logistics and medical capabilities, counter-improvised explosive device capabilities and special operations capabilities.

3. ISAF remains well postured to set the conditions for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mission in Afghanistan in the period beyond 2014.

4. The Afghan forces have continued to mature and have demonstrated their ability to provide security across Afghanistan. They have maintained a high operational tempo and successfully secured the second round of the presidential election, a key event for this period, with limited ISAF support. Funding remains a key concern. Continued international funding will be required in order to maintain their current capacity.

International Security Assistance Force levels

5. As at 31 July, a total of 49,902 ISAF personnel were in theatre.

International Security Assistance Force casualties[2]

6. The number of ISAF casualties decreased by more than 70 per cent during the reporting period compared with the same period one year ago. The decrease in ISAF casualties is attributed to the Afghan forces having taken the lead for security and the systematic decrease in the number of ISAF forces in theatre.

[1] Afghan security institutions consist of the ministerial level: the Ministry of Interior; the Ministry of Defence; and the National Directorate of Security.

[2] Throughout the present report, the term "casualties" refers to both killed and wounded individuals as a consequence of the conflict in Afghanistan.

Civilian casualties

7. ISAF assesses that the number of insurgent-caused civilian casualties increased by 35 per cent in the reporting period compared with the same period in 2013 and accounted for 97 per cent of the total number of civilian casualty events. The insurgents' indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices in populated areas remains the main cause of the majority of insurgent-caused civilian casualties.

8. Compared with the same quarter in 2013, the number of ISAF-caused civilian casualties decreased from 16 to 5, while the number of civilian casualties caused by the Afghan forces decreased from 73 to 41.

9. Reducing civilian casualties remains a priority for both ISAF and the Government of Afghanistan. ISAF continues to assist the Afghan authorities in mentoring and monitoring the full implementation of the established civilian casualty mitigation systems. However, the Afghan capacity to mitigate civilian harm, properly investigate incidents that do occur, make amends and draw lessons learned remains embryonic. Continued support for this area will therefore need to be a sustained focus for the Resolute Support mission.

Transition

10. The Afghan forces continue to improve in their ability to plan, coordinate and execute operations. It is assessed that the Afghan forces are on track to complete the transition later in 2014.

II. Security situation

11. The overall security situation within Afghanistan continues to improve. With ISAF support, the Afghan forces have continued to mature and have successfully led the security effort, which has been dominated by the electoral process, in terms of both operations and information.

12. Enemy-initiated attacks decreased compared with the same period in 2013. Key tactical successes of the Afghan Special Security Forces, which are trained, advised and assisted by the NATO Special Operations Component Command, have helped to significantly reduce the overall capacity of the enemy to initiate attacks and create space to conduct capacity-building efforts at the ministerial level.

13. Insurgents continued to focus their efforts on three main goals: establishing a dominant presence in rural areas; challenging the ability of the Afghan forces to provide security and discrediting the legitimacy of the Government; and maintaining their freedom of movement.

14. In order to influence and disrupt the electoral process, insurgents continued to use high-profile attacks with the aim of dominating media headlines. During the reporting period, several attacks occurred on Government of Afghanistan officials, including an assassination attempt on the presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah on 6 June 2014. Overall, the insurgency was unsuccessful in disrupting the electoral process, thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of the Afghan forces. However, given the uncertain result of the election to date, the insurgents will continue to use allegations of electoral fraud, high-profile attacks and civilian casualties in order to undermine the effort to establish a strong unified government.

15. Peace talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban senior leadership did not make progress during the quarter under review and are assessed to be unlikely to do so in the near future. The Taliban senior leadership remains openly opposed to starting any peace initiatives with the current Afghan administration.

III. Afghan security institutions and Afghan National Security Forces

16. The Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police are nearly fully fielded. The main effort is now focused on professionalizing the force. It is currently assessed that the Afghan forces will be ready to take full responsibility for security in Afghanistan by 31 December 2014.

17. During the reporting period, the Afghan forces continued to make improvements towards achieving a self-sustainable force. Several examples demonstrated that the Afghan forces were capable of planning and executing complex offensive operations. The effective security provided by the Afghan forces during the run-off presidential election on 14 June 2014 helped to strengthen their self-confidence and to increase their credibility in the eyes of the Afghan people.

18. The Government of Afghanistan and the international community continue to make a strong effort in developing the Afghan Air Force, which should reach operational capability in 2018. At present, the Air Force is manned at approximately 90 per cent of its establishment and has the capability to conduct a limited number of missions, such as light airlift, reconnaissance and casualty evacuation.

19. The Afghan Local Police continues to play an important role in delivering local security, particularly in rural populated areas. There are currently 28,780 Afghan Local Police in 150 districts, with 27,817 in 145 districts completely transitioned to Afghan authorities. The Afghan Local Police programme is managed by the Ministry of Interior, with police paid by Ministry officials and their actions directed and supervised by Afghan provincial and district government officials.

20. The Afghan forces continue to improve their capabilities to train and develop their soldiers and units. There are currently approximately 70 functional training facilities, of which two thirds have been transitioned to the Afghan forces. The most challenging area for the Afghan forces remains the lack of experienced instructors.

21. The growth and development of the Afghan forces' health-care system continues to improve. The leadership of the Afghan forces remains actively engaged in the development of its hospital capabilities. There are currently eight functional hospitals, and the Afghan forces have focused their efforts on the management of casualties that are not time-critical, still relying on ISAF support for more urgent casualties, especially those requiring air medical evacuation capability. However, the Afghan forces' capability for ground casualty evacuation has improved.

22. Despite the positive developments in terms of building and training the force and the successful delivery of security, the Afghan forces still face challenges in sustaining the force. Despite being tactically and operationally effective in the field, the Afghan forces still require ongoing ISAF support in closing capability gaps and developmental shortfalls in ministerial capacity and connectivity, aviation,

intelligence, fire support coordination, logistics and medical capabilities, counter-improvised explosive device capabilities and special operations capabilities.

IV. Civil-military interaction

Governance support

23. The run-off presidential election held on 14 June 2014 was the key event during the reporting period. The Afghan forces were fully responsible for the planning and execution of election security, with ISAF providing logistical support upon request, including the delivery of sensitive electoral materials across the country before election day and during the audit process. ISAF continued to provide support and secure accommodation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and European Union election support teams for the preparation and execution of their electoral observation mission.

24. The active engagement of NATO with the wider international community, Afghan civil society and the Government of Afghanistan continued during the reporting period through the NATO Senior Civilian Representative. Key areas were the negotiation of the NATO status-of-forces agreement and support for the efforts to improve the situation of women and the protection of children.

25. NATO is also represented at wider regional forums, such as the Istanbul Process in the Heart of Asia region and the International Contact Group of Special Representatives for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The most recent meeting of the International Contact Group was held in May 2014 and was focused on elections and the progress made in the overall Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework process.

Development support

26. In the reporting period, the Swedish Provincial Reconstruction Team in Balkh closed. The Provincial Reconstruction Team in Jowzjan, operated by Turkey, is the last team in operation.

Support for international organizations/United Nations

27. In the reporting period, ISAF continued to support international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), within their means and capabilities, and to support United Nations humanitarian activities in complex emergencies. However, the continued decrease in ISAF troop numbers has had an impact on ISAF support for international organizations and NGOs, as ISAF is no longer able to geographically cover the whole territory of Afghanistan.

V. Redeployment

28. ISAF redeployment is on track.

29. Redeployment and disposal activities as well as basing drawdown remain fully coherent with the ISAF campaign plan in order to optimize the use of resources, facilities, movement infrastructure and lines of communication. Strategic airlift

capacity is sufficient to mitigate constraints on the use of the ground lines of communications and remains the fastest, most flexible and safest mode of transport.

30. NATO-brokered transit agreements are being maintained, and discussions with neighbouring countries have started to put in place the required arrangements to support the follow-on mission.

VI. Border crossing points

31. All border crossing points remained open to ISAF traffic during the reporting period.

32. Cross-border issues remain a source of tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan. A total of 100 cross-border incidents occurred in the quarter under review, with the bulk of the incidents attributed to indirect and direct fire. The majority of the incidents were located close to the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, particularly in Kunar, Khost and Nangahar provinces.

33. ISAF continues to facilitate a dialogue and cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan in terms of counter-terrorism operations.

VII. Implementation by the International Security Assistance Force of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security

34. During the previous quarter, ISAF efforts on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions, through the integration of a gender perspective, continued to focus on Afghan female participation and gender integration in the security services, in close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan and the international community.

35. The appointment of a Brigadier-General as Gender Adviser to the ISAF Commander had a positive impact on the cooperation between ISAF and security ministries on gender-related issues. Since her arrival in mid-April, the ISAF Gender Adviser has had numerous engagements with key leaders of the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence.

36. The network of gender (field) advisers and focal points continues to be instrumental in the implementation of gender perspectives and resolution 1325 (2000) by supporting the Commanders and staff in integrating relevant aspects into the planning, execution and assessment of ISAF activities. The network of gender focal points has improved, with regular meetings and other exchanges of information taking place between the military headquarters. These engagements have contributed to a better understanding of future strategies for further female recruitment, training and development in the Afghan forces, as well as of the need for those strategies to be supported with the necessary political will.

37. Approximately 2,000 women, or just over 1 per cent of the total force, are currently serving in the Afghan National Police. On 7 July 2014, 51 female officers destined for positions with an increasingly active role graduated from the Afghan National Police Academy. The ISAF Gender Adviser attended the graduation ceremony and addressed the female graduates.

38. The Afghan National Army currently has approximately 700 women serving, which is less than 1 per cent of the force. The Afghan National Army has reached an education and training capability of 550 female candidates per year. Both ministries continue to face challenges in areas such as gender-specific infrastructure requirements, the implementation of plans and policies, and human resources management. The newly developed curriculum of the Afghan Officers Academy, developed in conjunction with the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan and the Ministry of Defence Ministerial Advisory Group, plans to devote 23 hours to the issue. The topics are wide-ranging, from compliance with gender equality and diversity policy to the benefits of gender integration and ways to address sexual harassment and assault within the Afghan National Army.

39. For the remainder of the ISAF mission, and in the planning for the Resolute Support mission, NATO will focus its efforts on the further development of gender training capacity and programmes, gender adviser capacity within the military structures, the integration of gender perspectives into the existing operational planning and assessment tools of NATO, and the improvement of reporting mechanisms on gender-related issues.

40. In support of political efforts to promote the women and peace and security agenda, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative continued to regularly organize and attend meetings with members of civil society, Afghan authorities, including the Ministry for Women's Affairs, and the international community to discuss gender integration issues in the security sector. Discussions were focused on efforts to better protect and empower women in the Afghan forces and security ministries. Participants agreed that more work needed to be done to raise female recruitment into the Afghan security institutions and forces, protect those already serving, improve their working conditions and ensure that their roles and responsibilities were meaningful.

41. The Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently shared a draft of the Afghanistan national action plan on women, peace and security with Kabul-based embassies and international organizations, including NATO, requesting feedback. The development of this plan, which has been done in consultation with relevant Afghan ministries and civil society organizations, is a positive step towards the serious implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). It is aimed at establishing strategic objectives that involve all government agencies. The request by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented a great opportunity to improve the document and strengthen NATO collaboration with Afghanistan on this important agenda.

42. Finally, it is of note that Afghanistan was one of the NATO partner nations involved in the development of the recently agreed revised NATO Women, Peace and Security Policy and Action Plan. By associating itself to these documents, Afghanistan has made another commitment towards implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions in its national defence and security sectors.

VIII. Implementation by the International Security Assistance Force of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005)

43. ISAF efforts on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) and related resolutions have been focused on the inclusion of reporting and monitoring on children and armed conflict, as well as the training of local forces, as an integral part of the planning process for the NATO mission in Afghanistan in the period beyond 2014.

44. In terms of practical support, ISAF focal points were appointed to coordinate efforts, in cooperation with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, on training, recruitment and legal advice within ISAF and the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan. ISAF has continued to improve the education and training of the Afghan forces on children and armed conflict; has provided advice and assistance on child protection measures and security response of Afghan security institutions; and has supported the implementation of the United Nations-Afghan action plan for the prevention of underage recruitment and the recently signed road map towards compliance.

45. ISAF redeployment and transition to the non-combat Resolute Support mission has reduced the ISAF footprint and will have an impact on the ability to support and monitor progress on children and armed conflict. The level of both outreach and the detail of reporting will become increasingly dependent on the Afghan forces, but we are committed to continuing to support them in their compliance efforts.

IX. Conclusion

46. As ISAF sets the conditions for the NATO train, advise and assist mission in the period beyond 2014, the Afghan forces continue to improve their capability. The Afghan forces have successfully responded to insurgent attacks and rendered attempts to disrupt the election process ineffective. ISAF remains on track to make the transition to the Resolute Support mission, while continuing to address the critical shortfalls with respect to the long-term sustainability of the Afghan forces. International commitment and funding remain essential to continuing the development of government institutions for legitimate, credible and enduring governance, and to maintaining security and stability in Afghanistan post-2014. With continued NATO and international support, Afghanistan will be institutionally capable of fielding and sustaining professional forces that provide effective security for Afghanistan and the Afghan people.